

Project Facts Sheet

Chandler Heights EMF- Mitigation Site

Project Description:

The project consists of 10.1 acres of vegetation and wildlife habitat mitigation along with an approximate 7 acres of additional seeding of grasses and other native plant species. The project involves establishment of plants and habitat consistent with that occurring in a natural Sonoran Desert wash. The planting is proposed to be located as part of a series of terraces and slopes along 2500 feet of the east bank of the East Maricopa Floodway. The site is designed to provide a variety of plant communities and terrace levels that vary in form and slope, to give the site an organic character. This project will aesthetically and physically benefit the surrounding area by enhancing the visual quality and preserving open space.

The proposed habitat is intended to support bird species as well as small mammals, reptiles, and some amphibian species. A variety of planting techniques will be utilized to study sustainability and assure maximum success of habitat establishment with minimum maintenance. During the establishment period, approximately five years, the mitigation area will not be open to public access. When established, it is envisioned that the project may incorporate an equestrian/pedestrian path along the west perimeter for passive recreation such as bird watching and enjoyment of the native landscape.

Purpose and Need:

The District is required under the Clean Water Act's Section 404 permit to establish a 9.1 acre site of vegetation and wildlife habitat to replace habitat damaged while constructing a flood control basin East of this site.

The Phoenix metro area is continually growing and the today's agricultural land around this site is quickly being sold and developed into residential communities. It will be increasingly more important to preserve and establish corridors of habitat and open space in order to conserve a quality of life integral to these rural areas.

Project Location:

The Mitigation project is located on the East side of the Maricopa Floodway along and within 2,000 feet of the channel banks, just South of Chandler Heights Road.

Existing Conditions:

The existing site is bounded to the east by a residential development and by the floodway on the west. Currently, the site consists on soil piles approximately eight feet above the grade of the adjacent residential community, resulting from deposits of sediment from Queen Creek. The site is ideally situated along the bank of the 400 foot wide East Maricopa Floodway, allowing for an open space connection to the San Tan mountains as well as a proposed habitat site that the City of Gilbert is planning to the north.

Project Objectives:

The Project's key objectives include the following:

- Provide 10.1 Acres of vegetation planting and wildlife habitat to meet the Army Corps of Engineers' Section 404 permit requirements for the Elliot Road Detention Basin and Outfall project.
- Provide an opportunity to conduct various planting technique research to study the sustainability success for application in future projects.
- Identify a corridor for the Maricopa County Trail (Marathon Trail) through the project that will be linked to other segments of the EMF.
- Provide low maintenance watering techniques and solutions for plant and habitat establishment.
- Incorporate future open space and provide for the recreational needs of the local communities.
- Identify possible future opportunities to provide for future mitigation needs.
- Implement the landscape character vision outlined for the corridor in the East Maricopa Floodway Capacity Mitigation and Multi-Use Corridor Study.